

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 USIE-00 IO-13 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9479
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
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AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: REACTION TO ELECTORAL LAW

REF: MADRID 2163

1. EARLY REACTION TO THE ELECTORAL LAW HAS COME IN
PREDICATBLE PATTERNS, WITH THE CONSERVATIVE ALIANZA POPULAR
COMPLAINING THAT THE SYSTEM FOR SENATE ELECTION VIOLATES THE
AGREEED MAJORITY SYSTEM, AND VARIOUS PARTIES TO THE LEFT,
INCLUDING THE PCE, THE PSOE, AND THE SMALL, RADICAL
MOVIMIENTO COMUNISTA, SCORING THE BREVITY OF THE CAMPAIGN
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(THREE WEEKS), THE FAILURE TO GIVE 18-YEAR-OLDS THE VOTE,
AND FINANCING PRIVISIONS AS VARIOUSLY ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AND
FAVORING THE RIGHT OVER THE LEFT. SOME PARTIES, INCLUDING
THE PSOE, ALSO CRITICIZED THE PREVENTION OF A CANDIDATE
RUNNING IN MORE THAN ONE PROVINCE. THERE WAS A SCATTERED
CRITICISM OF SPECIFIC OTHER POINTS, INCLUDING THE IMBALANCE
BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN VOTES.

2. MOST COMMENTS, HOWEVER, MIXED THEIR CRITICISMS WITH RECOGNITION OF POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN THE OVERALL PACKAGE. ONLY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC EQUIPO AND THE PARTIDO POPULAR CHRISTIANO DEMOCRATICO (A CENTRO DEMOCRATICO COMPONENT) ESCHEWED CRITICISM AND DECLARED THE LAW "POSITIVE", WHILE TIerno GALVAN'S PSP CALLED THE LAW "CLEARLY UNFAIR" AND THE COMMUNIST BPLINTER PTE CALLED IT "UNACCEPTABLE AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC". PERHPAS THE MOST REPRESENTATIVE SUMMATION CAME FROM CATALAN LEADER (CDC) JORDI PUJOL, WHO SAID "THEY ARE NOT THE NORMS OF DEMOCRACY BUT THEY PERMIT (US) TO GO TO DEMOCRACY".

3. REINFORMCING THE IMPRESSION OF BROAD ACCEPTANCE OF THE LAW WAS THE SERIOUS, SENSIBLE EDITORIAL IN THE CATHOLIC CENTRIST YA. CALLING THE NEW LAW "THE NORMS POSSIBLE TODAY", THE PAPER PRAISES THE CORRECTIVES BUILT INTO BOTH THE SENATE AND CONGRESS ELECTION SYSTEMS, DEFENDS THE STRENGTH GIVEN RURAL AREAS AS KEEPING A FEW CITIES FROM DOMINATING THE CORTES, AND HAILS THE SWEEPING LIST OF INELIGIBLE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AS "A PROBLEM FOR THE POLITICIAL CLASS INSTALLED IN POWER (BUT) NOT A PROBLEM FOR THE SPANISH PEOPLE". WE UNDERSTAND FOR INSTANCE, THAT A GOODDLY NUMBER OF MAYORS, WHO MUST RESIGNE TO RUN FOR THE CORTES,ARE QUITE UNHAPPY AND COMPARE THEIR SITUATION UNFAVORABLY WITH THAT OF SUAREZ, WHO CAN RUN. HOWEVER, RESPECTED POLITICAL COMMENTATOR LUIS APOSTUA NOTED IN YA THAT THE PUBLIC IN GNERAL WILL REACT FAVORALY BECAUSE "STILL ALIVE IS THE SCANDAL OF THE 1971 ELECTION OF CORTES FAMILY MEMBERS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH WAS THE MOST SENSATIONAL PARADE OF DIRECTOR GENERAL WE EVER HAD TO WITNESS".

4. IN SUM, SETTING ASIDE THE POLITICAL ISSUE OF SUAREZ' POTENTIAL CANDIDACY, THE OVERALL IMPRESSION OF REACTION TO THE ELECTORAL LAW IS ONE OF CONSENSUS OR AT LEAST ACQUIESCENEE AMONG THE IMPORTANT POLITICAL GROUPS, WITH THE SPECIFIC GRUMBLES OF ONE SIDE BALANCED OUT BY THOSE OF THE OTHER IN A REFLECTION OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS WHICH SIERED THE LAW. COMPLAINTS WERE INEVITABLE, BUT IT APPEARS THE POLITICIANS WILL PLAY.EATON

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